

## Before Pregnancy:

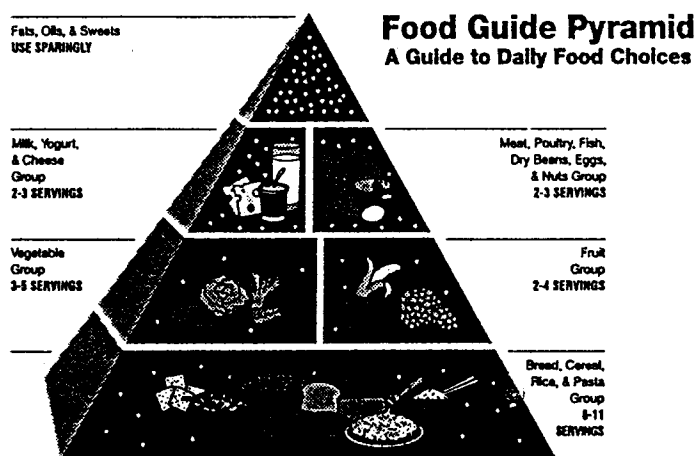
## Prepare for a Healthy Baby!



Before you decide to have your next baby, there are several things that you can do to make sure that you have the healthiest baby possible:

### Eat a balanced diet

Eat a variety of foods from all the food groups included in the food guide pyramid.

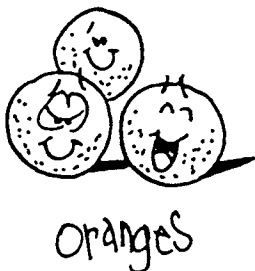


### Eat foods with folate every day

Folate is a B vitamin used to make new cells, like red blood cells. It is needed very early in pregnancy before the mother knows she is pregnant. Folate may reduce your risk of birth defects. Folate is often found in vegetables and cooked dried beans.

#### Folate sources

dried beans and peas	whole artichoke	asparagus	Brussels sprouts
orange juice	wheat germ	avocado	spinach
turnip greens	lima beans	liver	pineapple juice
cereals fortified with folate			



## **Eat or drink foods with enough calcium**

Milk, cheese, or yogurt are excellent sources. Calcium builds strong bones. Women less than 24 years old should have three servings every day and women 24 and older at least two servings every day. Pregnant women need more calcium.



## **Eat foods with enough iron**

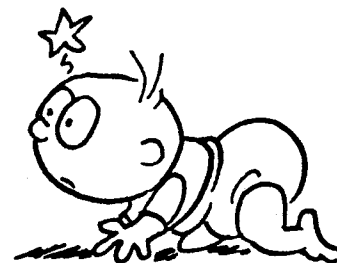
Meats, poultry, and fish are good sources. Fruits and vegetables with vitamin C will help your body to use iron in foods. Iron is a part of red blood cells needed in growing babies.

## **Maintain a healthy weight**

Being a healthy weight for your height may reduce your chances for some diseases. If you become pregnant, a healthy weight will improve your chance for having a baby with a healthy weight. You should not try to lose weight during your pregnancy.

## **Do not drink alcohol**

Beer, wine, or mixed drinks contain alcohol. Alcohol can harm your baby, especially in the first few weeks before the mother knows she is pregnant.



## **Do not take drugs**

Using crack or cocaine one time while you are pregnant can harm your baby.

## **Do not smoke**

Smoking will increase the risk of your baby being underweight. Underweight babies have more health problems.



**Give yourself and  
your next baby a  
healthy start!**

Kansas Dept. Of Health & Environment-BCYF  
900 SW Jackson, LOB, Topeka, KS. 66612-1290 (913)  
296-1320

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